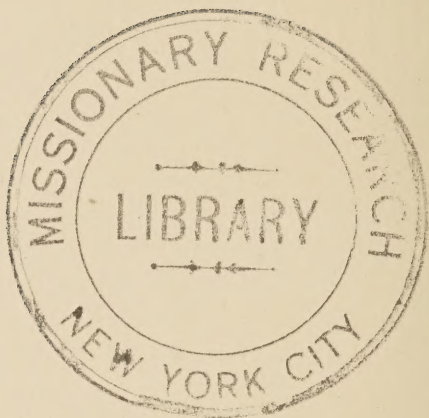


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THE SECOND CITY
OF THE
BRITISH EMPIRE

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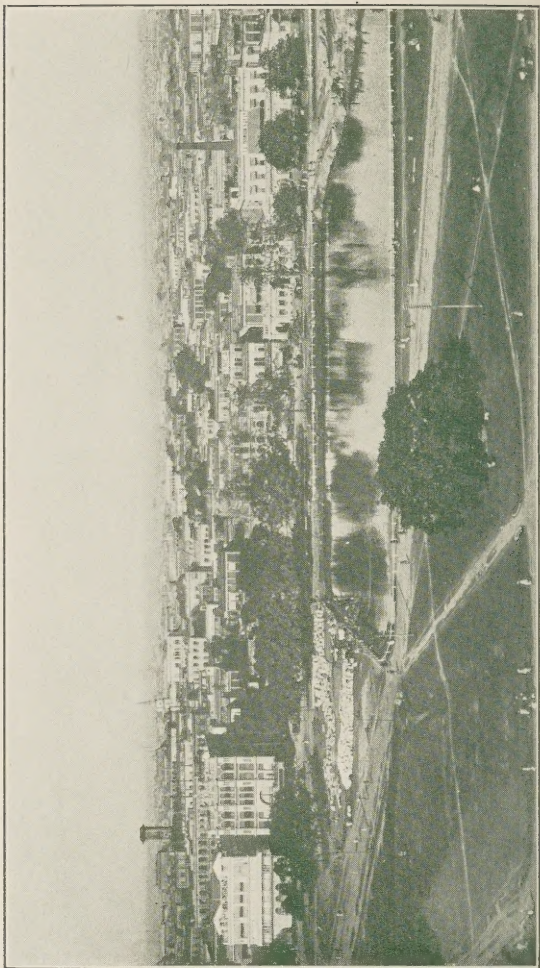


The Second City of the British Empire

BENJAMIN R. BARBER

General Secretary Young Men's Christian Association
Calcutta, India

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
124 East Twenty-eighth Street
New York City



CALCUTTA--LOOKING NORTH FROM THE PARK

I. The First City of India

A Mighty Metropolis Calcutta is the most important commercial, political and educational center in India. It is ninety miles from the sea on a river navigable for the largest ocean steamers. The annual import and export trade amounts to \$551,000,000. It is the home of hundreds of Europeans in Government service, while scores of rajahs, princes, zemindars and other gentlemen of wealth make it their residence. Though the capital has been removed to Delhi, the King Emperor says, "Calcutta must ever remain the premier city." Twenty-five colleges and sixteen business and other schools with nearly 10,000 students make this the largest student center in India. Added to these are 21,000 resident boys in sixty high schools. Calcutta University examines each year over 14,000 students, more than the combined enrollment of Harvard, Toronto and the University of Chicago. Religiously, with its temples, mosques and shrines, with its multitude of devotees, its hundreds of priests and holy men, its feasts, festivals and bathing ghats, Calcutta has a significance scarcely second to any city of the world.

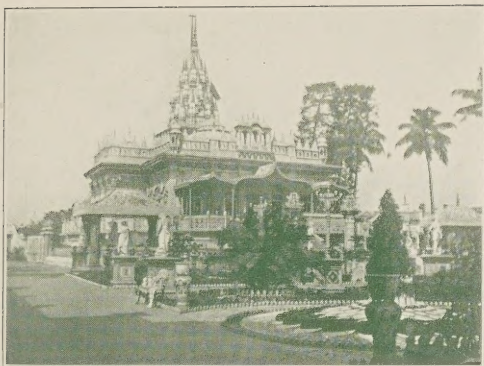
Cosmopolitan The city has a million and a quarter of inhabitants. Magnificent public buildings and parks, electric cars, fine carriages, automobiles and daily papers and the mingling of nations, proclaim it indeed a modern city. The streets throng with men who constitute sixty-eight per cent of the population. The grog-shops, gambling dens, brothels and race courses are the contributions of many lands. There are two score of Protestant Christian Churches in the city. The number of communicants is 40,511, of which 11,402 are Indians. There are Christian colleges, hospitals, orphanages and homes for the blind, the leper, the deaf and the dumb. There are 225 associations and clubs whose objects are social, athletic, educational or religious. Conspicuous among the religious institutions of the city is a modern Young Men's Christian Association.

II. The City's Perils and Hopes

Militant Evil

Thousands of miles from their native Britain and America, far removed from the restraints of friends and home influences, there are some young men who live consistent Christian lives and who render efficient service to the Churches and to the Association. It is truly said, however, that on coming to India the average man "leaves his religion behind him at Aden." The life of most of these men is a hindrance to the progress of Christian faith and morals among the Hindus, who regard all Westerners as Christians. Among these, they see with bewilderment and scorn, drunkenness, profanity, gambling and immorality abound. Few homes are open to foreign young men and they are compelled to live in hotels, common boarding houses or chumeries. Drinking is very common in these chumeries, and dissolute women are frequently brought into them. There are clubs which import European girls, providing them with a beautiful house, fine carriages and every equipment with which to make the club profitable to the owner. The receipts of one of these houses with four occupants have been known to exceed \$1,000 a month.

The races lead men into a fast life. Sunday is disregarded or becomes a day for social calls, golfing, motoring or other forms of recreation. "Peg" drinking (whiskey and soda) is well-nigh universal among foreigners. Though by the Hindu scriptures Hindus are forbidden to drink liquor, this evil is increasing rapidly among them. It is one of the wrongs for which Western civilization must answer. In observing a grog-shop for thirty minutes I saw sixty men, women and children enter to drink. Worse still is the use of gunga, a native drug. Cocaine and opium eating are becoming very prevalent. Gambling seems to be on the increase. Theatres of a low order attract thousands.



JAIN TEMPLE, CALCUTTA

The Scarlet Contagion

“Impurity is to India what the drink problem is to England.” It is one of the greatest enemies of the Indian young man. Taught it from infancy by the time-honored servant, he grows up regardless of its evil effects. False modesty on the part of his parents prevents any mention of the subject to the boy. Thus the dens which infest the vicinity of his home, the temples, the colleges and messes, easily become an attraction to him. The Hindu scriptures are full of the immoral escapades of their gods. The temples are hung with obscene pictures; within are gods of passion; without are carvings too vile to allow the eye to rest upon them. Why should the young man draw back when the priests even dedicate young girls to a life of shame within the temple precincts, accessible to the men of all castes? They call them “the slaves of the gods”; they are more the slaves of men. So bold, insistent, cheap, so varied in its form is this sin that only the strongest stand in so great a temptation. No subject in a public meeting attracts men like the subject of purity; nor does one come from a morbid curiosity merely, but that if possible he may find a way of escape from the terrible demon that binds him. In Calcutta, according to the census of 1901, of the women over ten years of age, one out of every fourteen is disreputable and in one ward of the city one out of every four.



HINDU PRIESTS OR FAKIRS

Hinduism Confronted with the facts, one must
Powerless conclude that to-day Hinduism is
powerless to save men from these sins.

The educated man feels this, but, held by age-long customs and with a lack of courage to take his stand for the right, he drifts—he knows not whither. If loss of faith in one's religion is not replaced by faith in another, the result is atheism, agnosticism, infidelity, worse than all, unrestrained, gross sin. If immoral and infidel literature which floods the land falls into the student's hands at such a critical time, it finds him an easy prey. The only hope for all these evils is the Gospel, and just as that Gospel has made us strong so will it make the young men of India strong. The Young Men's Christian Association is in a unique position to place this help within their reach.

III. The Young Men of Western Races

Called By the Church

The Young Men's Christian Association has never entered any city in mission lands without first receiving a call from the united missionary bodies in that field. During the visit of Mr. Luther D. Wishard to the Orient in 1889, the Calcutta Missionary Conference appealed to the International Committee of New York to send a secretary to undertake work for young men. In response to this appeal, Mr. J. Campbell White arrived at the end of 1893. It is largely through the great faith, foresight and indomitable energy of Mr. White, supported by the gifts and prayers of a host of godly men and women, that the European and Indian young men of Calcutta have to-day so great a heritage in splendid buildings and well-established institutions as is found in the present Young Men's Christian Association.



EUROPEAN BRANCH BUILDING, CALCUTTA

The work was first undertaken for Europeans in a small rented building in the English quarter. To-day the European Branch occupies a building ideally located and valued at \$100,000. It has

most of the features of the modern Association buildings of America—a gymnasium, auditorium, reading room, library, recreation rooms, classrooms, dormitories and boarding department with accommodations for forty men.

A Strong Appeal to the Strong

This plant provides a place for young men arriving for the first time. Wholesome quarters and strong companionships are of great help to them while they are getting their bearings or are becoming adjusted to their new life by furnishing them good associations with home comforts. They are brought into a center of religious influence and provided recreation, clean sports, healthful games, pure literature, concerts, scientific and literary lectures, Bible classes and religious meetings. Nor is its religion of a narrow type, for the broad-minded are attracted and some of the best men of the city are supporters. The Association has the respect not only of members, but also of the missionaries and clergy and of most of the Government officials and mercantile men who are acquainted with its operations. The board of directors is composed of men possessing as fine business capacity as can be found in any city. The President of the Association is the secretary to the Governor of Bengal. The Governor himself is very sympathetic. The Mayor of the city is a vice-president. The treasurer is head of a leading firm. These and other directors, Calcutta's men of affairs, evidence their deep interest in the Association by generous gifts of time and money. The supervision of this branch devolves upon one secretary, assisted by a good staff of efficient committee workers. In America, at least three men would be required for the task. The annual budget is \$10,000, which maintains an entirely self-supporting work including the salary of the secretary.



ANGLO-INDIAN BRANCH AUTOMOBILE SCHOOL,
CALCUTTA

**Ministering
to the
Handicapped**

There are 15,000 Anglo-Indians, those of mixed European and Indian descent, in Calcutta, of whom 3,000 are eligible for membership in the Association. In 1906 work was started for them in rented quarters. Emphasis was laid upon religious work, educational classes and athletics. Later, residential quarters were secured in a separate building for forty men, who pay a minimum charge for board and room. This branch of service has been locally self-supporting, but because of heavy rentals, and a limited financial constituency, it has carried a heavy burden. Recent gifts of \$25,000 each from two gentlemen are making possible large extension and permanency. A new secretary has been secured from America, who, after an exhaustive study of the field, is in a position to be of very large service to this needy, neglected community. A site has been purchased and a new building is under construction to minister to them.

IV. The Educated Indian Classes

**A Command-
ing Position** Of larger importance even than the work for Europeans or Anglo-Indians is the Association movement among the great student population, or, speaking more broadly, the educated English-speaking Indians. Bishop Thoburn says: "I believe I was among the first to call attention to the necessity for such a work, and with my personal interest in it, I have very naturally given close attention to its progress from the first. It is my deliberate judgment that this is one of the most important Christian enterprises in all the Oriental world." In a most providential manner a large building for the Indian work was secured in the very heart of the student section. In 1896, at the time of its purchase, the building was valued at \$50,000, but additions have been made so that the present value is about \$100,000. It includes a hall seating 600, two reading rooms, classrooms, library, a good gymnasium, offices and shops to rent and dormitories for twenty men.

In 1902, the Hon. John Wanamaker visited Calcutta and having seen the immense possibilities of the Association asked to have the privilege of furthering its usefulness. When told of the urgent needs of the high school boys, he very generously gave the money for a boys' building which cost, when completed and furnished, \$17,000. This has been in successful operation since 1904. Mrs. Finley J. Shepard (Miss Helen Gould) gave a splendid library which is very widely used. There are dormitories for eleven boys. Prospects are bright for a new hostel to accommodate fifty more. Within a radius of a mile, or easy walking distance of this double building, there are 7,000 college men and 10,000 high school boys, all speaking English.

There are 40,000 educated, English-speaking Indians in Government service or other employment within the city, who are within easy reach of this building. The late Mr. K. C. Banurji, M.A.,

B.L., registrar of the University and chairman of the College Street Branch from its organization until his death, said: "The Association building with the conspicuous marks it bears of its consecration is itself a witness for the Master. Right in the immediate vicinity of eight non-Christian institutions—Dr. Duff would have denounced the greater part of them as godless—it constrains students of these colleges daily to think of Christ, while only a few years back they might have gone on from year's end to year's end without even a passing thought of the Christian enterprise."



SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS CLUB OF PERSONAL WORKERS, CALCUTTA

Temptation Thwarted

The Association has been a haven to not a few from the fierce storms of temptation. Many have deliberately cut themselves loose from heathenism. Literally thousands have come for counsel on matters of life, religion and morals. Some have had doubts cleared away; some have been induced to forsake sin; others have found Christ a personal Saviour. Not a few are convinced of the claims of Christ, but have not the courage to acknowledge Him publicly. Many in need of employment have received assistance from the secretaries. Boys from the villages, unacquainted with the wicked devices of a great city, have found a

sheltered home in the Association. The fact that it is interested in the whole man disarms prejudice, and the Hindus, many of whom are contributing annually toward its maintenance, are glad to accept its hospitality.



A Student Worth Saving

The work of College Street Branch is primarily teaching and preaching the Gospel, whether by Bible class, evangelistic meeting, personal dealing or the preparation of pamphlets or articles. The reading room with scores of papers and magazines, the library of two thousand volumes, the dormitories for twenty men, the games and amusements, the social evenings, the gymnasium and outdoor athletics which have a growing fascination for Indian students—these all minister to the great object of evangelization. For the general public there is a

free reading room with half a dozen daily papers.

During the visit of Dr. Mott and Mr. Eddy to Calcutta in December, 1912, the evangelistic meetings had to be transferred to a theatre in order to hold the crowds who came to hear the Gospel. The first meeting was attended by 1,800 students. Hundreds became enquirers and are under further instruction while some have been baptized.

The Government of Bengal has recently made a building grant of \$25,000 for a hostel to accommodate forty students. This has been supplemented by a gift of \$10,000 from North America, and makes possible the erection of one of the best hostels in the city.



COLLEGE AND BOYS' BRANCH BUILDINGS, CALCUTTA

**Building
Strong Bodies**

The Indian student is no less eager for athletics than are American students. In 1908, the Association secured the services of a competent physical director from America. He has done much to extend and unite interest in physical welfare. His salary is paid jointly by the Government, by Hindus and by the Association, each contributing one third. There are large classes for students and boys in gymnastics, drill and first aid, besides extension work in outdoor athletics. He has many groups in schools outside the Association, and three months each year teaches a class of drill masters for the Government. Tours of inspection for the Government are made among schools and colleges. Interest is being aroused in larger and better playgrounds for the boys of the city.



FOOTBALL TEAM, BOYS' BRANCH, CALCUTTA

Leveler of Caste

The intermingling of Hindus and Christians in the monthly social meetings has had much to do in promoting fellowship and breaking down caste. Formerly, Hindus would not take refreshments at the social meetings, but now scarcely one refuses. This function is making for a broader view of life and has had much to do with strengthening the bond between Hindus and Christians. In the dormitories no caste distinctions have ever been observed. Hindus, Christians, Buddhists and Mohammedans all take the same food at a common table. One outside India can scarcely appreciate the significance of this fact. Even in most mission colleges, messes are provided for different classes. I once asked a Hindu physician why he was so anxious to have his boy live in our hostel, as he was breaking caste. He said he was sure his boy was in good moral surroundings, and for this reason he could afford to see him lose caste. The rooms are in demand for the place is sanitary and pure in its surroundings and influence, which is not to be said of every mess. A recent order of the Government compels students to live in approved hostels. The visitation committee, appointed by the Government on its recent inspection, was greatly pleased with our rooms.

There are 100 boarding clubs in the neighborhood of the student building. The largest of these, accommodating 260 students, was built by the Government, and is only three minutes' walk from the Association building. No meeting or Bible

class is allowed inside, but the men come freely to the meetings. Students are pleased to have the secretaries call upon them. These calls tend to renew acquaintance, to bring men to the Association building or to give opportunity for religious conversation.

Removing Mountains The obstacles in the way of men accepting Christianity are tremendous and almost inconceivable to our Western minds. A man may be brought to believe in the Gospel, and at that time be unwilling to make public his belief by baptism. By this act he breaks caste and the fiercest persecution begins. He must give up father, mother, wife, friends, further education, inheritance, everything. The consequence is that there are thousands who secretly believe in Christ, but who do not identify themselves with Christians. Though there are baptisms, we do not estimate all results by them. The real results are seen in transformed lives, in a new hope in Christ and knowledge of the Scriptures. Men return, after months and years, to speak of Christian teaching received from the Association. It is impossible for any Christian who knows the facts to disbelieve in the ultimate triumph of Christianity among these educated men of India. Tasting the joy of salvation from sin, they are being made willing to give up houses, and brethren, and sisters, and father, and mother, and wife, and children, and land, for Christ's sake and the Gospel's.

Not Peace but a Sword A young Hindu asked for admission into the hostel. He came, as he said afterward, to see how Christians lived. He joined a Bible class, became interested in Christianity, was convinced, and, after some struggle with himself, decided to become a Christian. It was hard for him to throw himself in faith upon God, for he had been brought up in luxury, was receiving a regular and liberal allowance, and was getting on well with his medical course. One day he came to a parting of the ways, when a decision must be made. He said, "I want to be baptized." "Have you written your father?"



STUDENT HOSTEL RESIDENTS, CALCUTTA

was asked. "No," he had not. The letter was written, and the reply was immediate. "You must not become a Christian, for you will break your mother's heart; you will bring gray hairs to your poor father; we shall be ostracized by our caste, and lose our social standing." But the young man was determined. Then the father wrote, "I shall disinherit you." As the father was rich, and the grandfather had left the son a large sum of money, this was a question of no little consequence. But the cry for freedom in the soul is strong and the son still persisted in his resolution to be baptized. Then the father came hundreds of miles to Calcutta to dissuade his son. He was met at the door and conducted to his son's room. The door was shut and the two left alone. The beseechings of that father, as he implored his son not to disgrace the family, others will never know. After an hour the son said: "Now, father, I want to go out, for I have an engagement. Remain here and rest, and I shall return after a while." That was the day set for the baptism, and a group of Christians were all assembled and waiting in the church. With a firm step, the young man walked to the altar rail, and when the ceremony was over, he went back to his father and said, "It is all over now, and I have just come from my baptism." Such a struggle is inevitable when a young Hindu decides to accept Christ, for He said, "I came not to send peace, but a sword."

Indian Initiative To the Christian men, the Association is a training school. Since its formation from twenty to thirty of its members have entered Christian callings. A score of able and devoted members help in the daily activities. For years they conducted what might be called a Bible school for ragged boys, though sometimes even the rags are wanting. They lead Bible classes, speak in the open-air services, and in other religious meetings. They arrange social meetings and secure new members. They have also formed bands of their own, and carry on a good deal of Christian work independently. There is a growing spirit of independence, which



B. C. SIRCAR,

A convert of College Branch, now
National Secretary for Bengal

will bear abundant fruit in the years to come. There is a desire to undertake the work of evangelization themselves. The spirit fills the mind of the student to-day, which animates the National Congress, where Hindus, Mohammedans, and Christians meet to discuss matters of reform, how the Indian may secure larger responsibility in the government of his own land, and how he may make himself more useful.

To maintain these activities, \$3,500 is required annually, aside from salaries of the foreign secretaries. All this is provided locally. The budget

is growing and it is hoped to get more and more from Indian Christians, though the number of those who are well-to-do is not large. The control of the College Street Branch is under a committee of fifteen Indians and Europeans. There are three Indian and three foreign secretaries.

Government Recognition The rigid neutrality of the Government in religious matters prevents officials personally from taking any part, or exerting any Christian influence, when Hindus are affected, yet it has always looked with favor on whatever benefits the student. The Government of Bengal made a grant of \$13,300 toward the College Branch building, a grant of \$12,000 toward the European work, and recurring grants to the physical director's fund and to the various branches. The recent grant for the student hostel already noted evidences continued confidence.

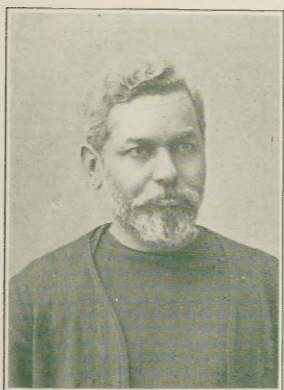
Looking Forward

Beyond Experiment

Mr. Banurji once said: "I feel called to give an expression of my gratitude to you for extending the Association movement to my country. It has operated as a new inspiration to the cause of evangelization in India. It has drawn out the capacity for Christian service heretofore latent in the young men of our Churches. It has brought the students of non-missionary institutions, so long unreached, into close touch with Christian truth and Christian guidance. It has provided a much-missed rallying point for missionaries of different denominations to present a united front to the rampant forces of error and unbelief. The Lord bless you for your work among my people."

A Look Ahead

Thousands of students and schoolboys are still outside this sphere of influence. Effort remains to be made for the hundreds of Mohammedans in colleges. There are four hundred thousand vernacular-speaking young men in Calcutta, almost all of them unacquainted with Christ.



K. C. BANURJI,

Until his death, Registrar Calcutta University,
Chairman College Branch

Among these are the street railway, postal and telegraph employees and the native police. Little is being done for soldiers aside from the chaplain's service. The railway population of Howrah, the Calcutta terminal, has desperate need. There are many calls upon the secretaries for evangelistic work in centers outside of Calcutta. What the Association is doing



STUDENT GROUP IN ASSOCIATION HOSTEL
REPRESENTING FOUR RELIGIONS

in Calcutta it is also doing in Madras, Bombay, Rangoon, Colombo, Bangalore, Allahabad, Lahore and Simla, and could do in at least ten other great cities at once but for the lack of the men and the money to support them, and where the missionaries have repeatedly called for secretaries.

**The Call
of God** With such a field, fruitful, ripe, overpowering in its needs; with the knowledge that the North American Associations possess the resources in method, money, men and access to prayer for meeting that need, surely he is dull to hear, whose ears do not discern the voice of God, and slow of heart, whose faith does not quickly claim the inheritance for his Lord.

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